

Remarks

Entry of this Amendment and allowance of all remaining claims are respectfully requested. With entrance of this Amendment, claims 1-3, 7-10 & 19-24 will remain pending.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowability of claim 6 if rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Responsive to this indication, the allowable subject matter of claim 6 is written into independent claims 1 & 19. Thus, independent claims 1 & 19 are believed allowable, as well as the remaining claims which depend therefrom.

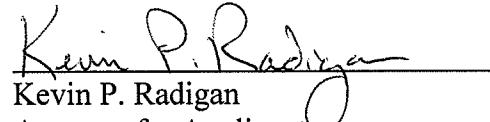
The 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejections stated in the initial Office Action are believed moot in view of the amendments submitted herewith. Further, responsive to the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, rejection to claim 7, the claim is amended herein to delete the word “notwithstanding”. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is also requested.

The amendments presented herewith are not intended as an acknowledgement that the previously-pending claims 1-5 & 7-27 were unpatentable over the art cited in the Office Action. Rather, the present amendments and cancellations are presented only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue the canceled subject matter and other claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

All pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, Applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone him at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,



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